

# DRAFT #1

# HUNTER MILL ROAD AREA SPECIAL STUDY

# VISION DOCUMENT

### Prepared for:

Hunter Mill Road Area Special Study Task Force Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning 12055 Government Center Parkway Fairfax, Virginia 22035

# Submitted by:

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Issue Date: October 17, 2005

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Section 1
Introduction

#### Introduction

THIS IS A DRAFT OF THE REPORT AND DOES NOT YET INCLUDE ALL INFORMATION IN MANY SECTIONS. A MORE COMPLETE DRAFT WILL BE AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 4, 2005.

This Vision Document is the result of an eight-week public engagement process initiated by the Hunter Mill Road Area Special Study Task Force and the Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning. In September 2005 CirclePoint was hired to create a forum to elicit comments from the public on the future of the Special Study area and convey that information to the Task Force. Our primary goal is to reinforce or build the bridge between the public and policy officials. This Vision Document does not include recommendations by the consultants on what the Task Force, Planning Commission or Board ultimately should do about the study area. Many public comments, however, do. There are specific recommendations from the consultant on how to continue improving the interface between the County and the public.

This document is organized into eight sections and an Appendix that includes several documents and materials. The sections are:

Section 1: Introduction

Section 2: Project Background

Section 3: Comment Summary and Analysis

Section 4: Public Engagement Plan

Section 5: Stakeholder Participation

Section 6: Visioning Workshop

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**Appendices** 



Section 2 Project Background

# **Project Background**

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Section 3
Comment Summary and Analysis

# Comment Summary and Analysis

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#### **Overview**

There were 15 questions in the visioning exercise and in nearly all groups, regardless of the question, at least one or several people communicated a very strong preference for no change in the current Comprehensive Plan. Given the level of support and degree of participation by residents in the Hunter Mill Road corridor, a clear consensus has emerged that residents in the corridor prefer no change in the current Comprehensive Plan.

There were other issues raised related to transportation, parks, housing, etc. Some of those issues specifically addressed the special study area, while others are related to a larger geographic area. The discussion questions below were developed by the consultant team based on a review of the comments from the October 1 Visioning Workshop. The discussion questions are intended to suggest how, if at all, the residents of the Hunter Mill Road corridor might begin to discuss some of those issues.

The major themes below represent a preliminary analysis by the consultant team of the public comments from the breakout groups at the October 1 Visioning Workshop.

#### **Major Themes**

- 1. Strategically managing and leveraging growth
- 2. Protecting neighborhood character
- 3. Maintaining the quantity and quality of public services
- 4. Creating a range of housing options
- 5. Creating new and upgrading existing recreational facilities
- 6. Improving environmental resources and health
- 7. Focusing investment in public facilities
- 8. Promoting economic expansion
- 9. Preserving historic resources
- 10. Providing greater mobility and connectivity
- 11. Changing and strengthening the public's role in decision making

Several issues and themes seem packed within the "no growth, no change in the comprehensive plan" sentiment – the group consensus. What many of the other comments also suggest is a great deal of fear and mistrust. This commentary identifies issues that are not but perhaps need discussion regardless of a decision to maintain the status quo in the Comprehensive Plan.

A sense of fear appears to exist and its cause may be that if there is any negotiation in the Hunter Mill Road area, a couple of things could occur:



# Section 3 Comment Summary and Analysis

- a) It will lead to additional incremental changes that will ultimately require renegotiation, further compromise and potentially adverse affects on the quality of life in the area and
- b) Any agreement is not durable and will not withstand a change in the elected leadership or pressure on the elected leadership to develop further to accommodate growth.

Those dynamics create unpredictability about how the land is used and preserved.

There are some discrete issues that are specific to the Hunter Mill Road area, such as the traffic management at interchanges along Sunset Hills Road, traffic calming along Hunter Mill Road and providing better access and safety along the Washington and Old Dominion Trail. The breakout group discussions revealed that there is not one way to address any of these issues.

Groups struggled with how to give appropriate weight to the comments of those most directly impacted by any change in or build out of the existing Comprehensive Plan as opposed to those who benefit from any change or build out. The latter group includes, for example, people seeking affordable places to live, people who want to live in more pedestrian- and transit-focused communities, as well as people who seek financial returns on land investments.

The county convened the visioning workshop and like any public meeting it is subject to sunshine laws. It is illegal to exclude from the workshop anyone. Many Hunter Mill Road corridor residents expressed concerns about how the visioning process would give greater priority to their comments over those who did not live within the corridor. Despite this concern, it was clear that people were not trying to intentionally exclude others.

The comments imply frustration with the lack of access by the public to the task force and elected leadership, which has made a discussion of the vision extremely difficult. Visioning invites people to articulate what they want. The limits of the visioning process, primarily a lack of time, raise the stakes for any opportunity to be heard, so it often becomes more important to say what is unacceptable and list the things that are not wanted. Given these circumstances it is understandable that people are angry and frustrated.

The study became heavily focused on the process and less so on the issues. There is a divergence of opinion on whether the study was justified and secondly how best to organize it. This has expectedly caused level of unproductive conflict to spiral upward, which may obscure the positive benefits on conflict in the public policy arena, as well as the positive aspects of the endeavor.

Going back to the framing issue, people seem to recognize that the question is not either/or; rather it is "How do we strategically manage and leverage growth AND protect neighborhood character AND maintain the quantity and quality of public services AND promote economic expansion, etc. The reality is that if there were easy solutions to these problems this meeting would be unnecessary.



# Section 3 Comment Summary and Analysis

#### **Unanswered Challenges**

These observations suggest two challenges: 1) what to talk about and 2) how to talk about it. Below are some questions that are intended to prompt some discussion among the participants at the October 1 Open House.

#### **What**

Should the discussion be framed with the premise that solutions to regional and countywide problems often yield regional and countywide benefits but create specific local impacts? Decisions made in areas contiguous to the Hunter Mill Road corridor may eventually impact those who live in the corridor.

Where is it possible to start a conversation that anticipates those discussions and decisions?

How can this area create contingencies to manage an uncertain future?

How can the area achieve a reasonable balance between the benefit/impact equation?

Is smart growth worth considering? If so, how can people start at the same place on what defines "smart growth?"

What types of design standards preserve and complement the character of existing neighborhoods?

There is not an unlimited reserve of vacant land for new housing to meet projected needs, what is best use of what is available to create a range of housing options within the county?

How are housing options created and improved—where, what kind, what portion should reflect market rates?

How is it best to address the current backlog of infrastructure and public facility needs with the current population? Is limiting density a viable approach?

How can expected population growth successfully address objectives associated with stormwater management, water quality, open and green space, air quality, etc.?

How can you manage the trade offs between limited land and the need for more recreation areas?

What level of investment in public transportation makes sense and for which modes?

What are the ways to maintain the quality of education and ease and prevent future overcrowding?

#### **How**



# Section 3 Comment Summary and Analysis

What types of processes would allow the community, business and elected leadership to more effectively anticipate and manage the conflict associated with negotiating the inevitable trade offs in public policy decisions?

How can the civic infrastructure be strengthened so that more people in the community have the capacity and information to participate in the decision-making processes?

What steps can be taken to integrate planning, development and decision making?

Where to start?

The compilation of all comments is in the Appendix \_\_\_\_.

# **Comment Areas**



**Employment** 

Walking, riding and biking

**Transportation** 

**Education** 

Environment

Housing

Faith and community services

Land use

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Section 4
Public Engagement Plan

# **Public Engagement Plan**

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### <u>Purpose</u>

The public engagement plan involved four activities for the Hunter Mill Road Area Special Study: 1) informal stakeholder meetings and interviews, 2) six stakeholder focus groups, 3) one public workshop, and 4) a final public open house. The purpose of the plan is to create a transparent forum that amplifies the voices and perspectives of those who live in the special study area, as defined by the Board of Supervisors, as well as those who work, worship, learn, play, and commute in and around the special study area.

The public engagement plan has resulted in a community-generated Vision Document. The study area, defined by the Board of Supervisors, served as the primary focus of the Task Force. Participants in the visioning process, however, often-raised issues related to areas outside of, but in proximity to, the study area.

The consultant team, in collaboration with the community, will present this Vision Document to the Hunter Mill Road Area Special Study Task Force. The Task Force will consider the Vision Document and other information, facts, and historical background to develop consensus on a set of recommendations that present, to the County Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors, options for developing the special study area.

# **Key Activities**



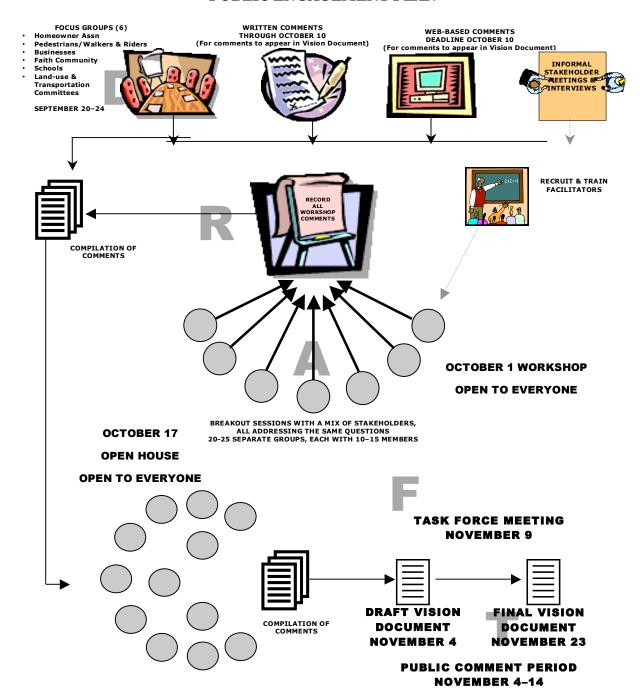
The public engagement process supported four key activities: 1) informal stakeholder meetings and interviews, 2) six stakeholder focus groups, 3) a visioning workshop, and 4) an open house. The graphic on the following page illustrates how the public engagement process worked and is followed by a detailed description of each key activity. More detailed descriptions of each activities were discussed earlier.





#### Section 4 Public Engagement Plan

#### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN





Section 4 Public Engagement Plan

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Section 5
Stakeholder Participation

# Stakeholder Participation

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### Visioning Workshop

According to sign-in sheets, 277 people participated in the October 1, 2005 Visioning Workshop. Of those, 273 were legible names and addresses. Sixty-seven percent of those attending the workshop identified themselves as residents who lived in the 22181 and 22182 zip codes. Both are the Vienna zip codes closest to Hunter Mill Road. Approximately 12 percent of participants claimed residency in Reston, zip codes 20190 and 20191, and six percent from Oakton, which includes the 22124 zip code. Of the remaining 40 participants, 36 are identifiably from other parts of Virginia.

# **Breakout Sessions**

Participants were assigned to 21 separate small breakout groups with 6 to 17 members. The assignments were random. At the registration table, each participant was provided with a name tag that included a number. The number indicated the group number to which that individual was assigned. When they arrived in their assigned groups, each participant was asked to complete the Participant Data Form and submit it to the group facilitator. The form was an attempt to address a concern expressed by several members of public that some groups may be over-represented by people who did not live in the Hunter Mill Road corridor. Underlying the concern was a fear that the weight of comments of nearby residents might be diminished.

Zip Code	Participants
22182 - Vienna	168
20190 - Reston	26
22181 - Vienna	18
22124 - Oakton	18
20191 - Reston	7
22180	3
22101	3
22066	3
22030	3
20171	3
20121	3
22102	2
22032	2
20170	2
20165	2
20120	2
22314	1
22201	1
22194	1
22043	1
22031	1
20774	1
20168	1
20111	1
Zip Code Total	273
Sign in Total	277

Below is an example of the form. A summary of participants by group number is in Appendix



# Section 5 Stakeholder Participation

<u>Hunter Mill R<mark>oad Area S</mark>pecial Study</u>				
	PARTIGIPARE DATA FORM			
	nt of reference, please refer to the Hunter Mill Road Area Special Study es in your participant package. Please select all that apply:			
1.	What is the zip code at your home?			
2.	What is the zip code at your place of employment?			
3.	If you are own a business, what is the zip code of your business?			
4. Specia	Do you have children in a school in or near the Hunter Mill Road Area I? If so, please identify the school.			
	☐ No ☐ Yes, school name:			
5.	How often do you bicycle in the Hunter Mill Road Area?  Daily Weekly Every now and then Never			
6. 7. 8. 9.	Do you regularly walk to (check all that apply):  Work? School? Exercise?			
10.	Do you worship in the Hunter Mill Road Area? If so, please name your place of			
11.	worship?  No Yes, place of worship:			
12. 13.	Do you belong to a homeowner association? If so, which one:  No Yes, homeowner association:			
14. 15.	Do you belong to a civic association? If so, which one:  No Yes, civic association:			
16.	Are you a current or recent member of a county advisory board, commission or study group? If, so what is the name?			
17.	□ No □ Yes, board/commission/study group:			
18.	What is your group number?			

# Focus Groups

Between September 28 and October 5, six stakeholder focus groups were convened. What follows is the summary of participation.

- Homeowner Associations 6 participants
- 2. Pedestrians, Bicyclists & Equestrians 3 participants
- 3. School Communities 4 participants
- 4. Businesses and Employers 8 participants
- 5. County Advisory Boards & Commissions 2 participants
- 6. Faith Communities 3 participants

A more complete discussion of focus groups appears in Section 7.







Section 6 Visioning Workshop

# Visioning Workshop

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# <u>Purpose</u>

Approximately 277 people representing close to 20 Virginia communities attended a four-and-a-half-hour Visioning Workshop on Saturday, October 1, 2005, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Madison High School, 2500 James Madison Drive in Vienna, Virginia. The October 1 workshop was open to anyone who chose to attend. The purpose of the Visioning Workshop was to provide a forum for community members and interest groups to address the issues surrounding the future of the Hunter Mill Road area.

The workshop was structured and facilitated to manage the large number of participants and to ensure that everyone had an opportunity to make a contribution. The meeting opened with a plenary session that included presentations on the current Comprehensive Plan, existing conditions, and potential impacts of land-use concepts.

# <u>Agenda</u>

9:00	<ul><li>Preliminary Activity</li><li>Registration</li><li>Open House</li><li>Refreshments</li></ul>	F
9:30	Opening	W. Steve Lee Lead Facilitator CirclePoint
9:35	Welcome	Board of Supervisors Task Force
9:45	Overview	Lead Facilitator
9:55	Comprehensive Plan & Existing Conditions	County Staff Consultant
10:25	Small Group Set-Up	Lead Facilitator



Section 6 Visioning Workshop



The breakout sessions at the Visioning Workshop were led by a group of volunteer facilitators from the community. The role of the facilitators was to:

- Refrain from contributing their own ideas. Act only as the meeting's "chauffeur."
- Remain neutral.
- Keep the group's attention focused on agenda items.
- Maintain the agreed-upon time schedule.
- Make sure everyone had a chance to participate.
- Defend others from personal attacks.

# **Breakout Groups**

The workshop was organized around group breakout sessions that included between 7 and 17 people each. Participants were assigned to 21 separate small breakout groups. The assignments were random. At the registration table, each participant was provided with a name tag that included a number. The number indicated the group number to which that individual was assigned. When they arrived in their assigned groups, each participant was asked to complete a Participant Data Form and submit it to the group facilitator. The form was an attempt to address a concern expressed by several members of public that some groups may be overrepresented with people who did not live in the Hunter Mill Road corridor. Underlying the concern was a fear that the weight of comments of nearby residents might be diminished.



Section 6 Visioning Workshop

# **Evaluation of the Workshop**

The compilation of evaluation comments was taken directly from the Meeting Evaluation distributed and collected at the October 1, 2005 Visioning Workshop from the approximately 277 people who attended. At the registration table, each person was provided a meeting evaluation form. At the conclusion of the workshop, 52 participants submitted evaluation forms that included answers to one or more questions. The consultant team organized the comments into categories. The completed evaluation forms and evaluation summary are included with the Appendices.

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Section 7 Open House

# Open House

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Section 8 Focus Groups

# Focus Groups

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Focus groups are useful in public engagement processes, such as a visioning process, because they allow the facilitator to test questions for the visioning workshop to ensure that they are framed appropriately and are inclusive enough to elicit rich, useful information from visioning process participants. Focus groups are intentionally designed to receive input from a limited number of people.

Between September 28 and October 5, six stakeholder focus groups were convened. Each focus group met for one 90-minute telephone session and was facilitated by CirclePoint. The focus group questions are included on Appendix \_\_\_\_ and were provided to participants before the focus group session. A summary of the focus groups appears below.

Six focus groups were held:

- 1. Homeowners
- 2. Businesses and employers
- 3. Pedestrian, bicyclists, and equestrians
- 4. Faith communities
- 5. School communities—selected elementary schools that are in the Madison school pyramid and that are closest to the subject area or are otherwise nearby
- 6. County advisory boards and commissions

Each focus group was designed to include only stakeholders from one of the six categories. Some individuals might fit in several categories but participated in only one focus group. By design, members of individual focus groups should have common interests but may offer different perspectives on the issues.

### Focus Group Selection Process

- Task Force members and the county project staff made recommendations for focus group participants.
- Some citizens suggested people or contacts from various groups or nominated themselves. There was an attempt to accommodate those citizens if possible.
- In addition, other county employees were asked to suggest people they work with on county boards and commissions.
- The county staff also suggested other potential focus group members from among individuals and groups active in the community.



Section 8 **Focus Groups** 

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**PARTICIPATI** 

# Focus Group Participants

**Homeowner Associations** September 28, 2005 from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

NAME	AFFILIATION		Ü	Ü	Ħ
Vickie McCormick	Victoria Farms	Ï			
Mike Powers	Hunter Mill Estates				
Jane Rachel	Hunter View Arms/Colvin				
David Dantzler	Hunter Station				
Zena Starr	Tamarack				
Bette Greenspan	Avon Park				
Jim Barrett	Wayside				
Keith Compton	Equestrian Park				
Carol Dowd	Crowell Road				

Pedestrians, Bicyclists & Equestrians September 29, 2005 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

**PARTICIPATED** CONFIRMED NAME **AFFILIATION** Wade Smith Non-motorized Transportation Committee Linda Byrne Equestrian Beverly Dickerson Equestrian Dennis Frew Washington Area Bicyclists Cristy Terry Pedestrian William Boule Fairfax County Park Authority, Hunter Mill Stephen Cerny Non-motorized transportation Potomac Peddlers Allen Nagin Kevin O'Connor Fairfax4Horses John Byrne Equestrian

Kristin Bonacci

Chuck Veatch

Michael Guthrie

Rosemarie Pelletier

Justina Johnson Head

Nina Graves

Joni Reich

PTA

**Parent** 

Sallie Mae

Long and Foster

Wolftrap Elementary, PTA

Focus Grapps
ON TICE PATED INVITED **School Communities** September 29, 2005 from 8:00 to 9:30 p.m. NAME **AFFILIATION** Sandra Furick Colvin Run Elementary Salvador Rivera Flint Hill Elementary Frank Bensinger Forest Edge Elementary Dr. Beth English Sunrise Valley Elementary Ellen Cury Terraset Elementary Jeanette Martino Westbriar Elementary Dr. Anita O'Brien Wolftrap Elementary Deborah Jackson Langston Hughes Middle School Mark Greenfelder Thoreau Middle School James Madison High Mark A. Merrell Bruce Butler South Lakes High Bert Schreibstien Edlin Fairfax Christian Jo A. S. Thoburn Judith Beattie Hunter Mill Country Day School Susan Cason PTA Betty Ann Dobrenz PTA PTA Joda Coolidge Jennifer DeCamp PTA Dianne Rose Terraset Elementary PTA Susan Thomas PTA Kristin Bonacci PTA PTA Joan Burkhart Leslie or Chris Vereide PTA PTA Bettina Lawton Maria Allen PTA Betty Ann Dobrenz PTA PTA Joda Coolidge Susan Thomas PTA



Section 8

Northern Virginia Community College Sunrise Valley, Oakton and Thoreau Parent

Section 8
Focus Groaps
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ONTIRE

	Businesses and Employers October 4, 2005 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.			TICIPATED
NAME	AFFILIATION	INVITED	ONFIRMED	Ë
William Lecos	Fairfax Chamber of Commerce			
Tracey White	Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce			
Tom Hirst	Lake Fairfax Business Park			
Jake Stroman	Boston Properties			
Chris Walker	Parkridge Center			
Matt Brennan	Brennan and Waite			
Joni Reich	Sallie Mae			
Bill Adams	Reston Hospital			
Donna Miller	Miller Musmar			
David DeMarco	SE Region Hovnanian			
Lynn Gilmore	Northrop Grumman			
Michael Batt	Microsoft			
Chris Lessard	Lessard Architectural Group			
Linda Mallison	Sugar Oak			
Michael Carlin	Access Point Public Affairs			
Kim Guarino	Hinge			
Catherine Riley	Fairfax County Economic Development Authority			
Stephen Fuller	George Mason University			
Holli Ploog	Unisys			
Jim Kepler	Data Networks Corporation			
Joe Ritchey	Prospective, Inc.			
Ron Christian	Lutheran Housing Organization			
William Keefe	Walsh Colucci			
Bruce Bennett	Hunter Mill Citizen's Association			





County Advisory Boards & Commissions October 4, 2005 from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.			Focu CONFIRME	Section 8 is <b>G</b> oups
NAME	AFFILIATION	ED	Ð	8
David Olin	History Commissioner, Dranesville			
Barbara Naef	History Commissioner, at-Large			
Elise Murray	History Commissioner, Hunter Mill/ARB			
Bruce Bennett	Hunter Mill Road Traffic Calming			
Edythe Frankel	Hunter Mill Land Use Committee			
Rebecca Cate	Fairfax Federation of Civic Associations			
Brain Deery	Transportation Advisory Committee, Dranesville			
Stuart Schwartz	Coalition for Smarter Growth			
Stephen Cerny	Affordable Housing			
Jim Barrett	Transportation need committee name			
John Callaghan	Housing committee name please			
Fran Steinbauer	Housing committee name please			
Stella Koch	Environmental Quality Advisory Council			

# **Faith Communities** October 5, 2005 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

Faith Communities October 5, 2005 from 6:3	-	INVITED	CONFIRME	ARTICIPATE
NAME	AFFILIATION			•
Kerrie Wilson	Reston Interfaith			
Barbara Reid	Cartersville Baptist Church			
Amos Dodge	International Church of the Four Square Gospel/Capital Church			
James Ferguson	Reston Presbyterian Church			
Bill Welch	Unitarian Universalist Church of Fairfax			
Rabbi Robert Nosanchuck	Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation			
Sterling Wilcox	Oakton United Methodist Church			
Jean Lentz	Unity of Fairfax Church			
	Reston Bible Church			
	United Christian Parish			
	St. Thomas a Becket Catholic Church			
	Oakbrook Church			
	Church of Jesus of Latter Day Saints			
	Washington Plaza Baptist Church			
	Good Shepard Lutheran Church			
	St. Anne's Episcopal Church			
	Community Bible Study Church			

Section 8 Focus Groups

# Focus Group Comment Summaries

AVAILABLE AT A LATER DATE

**Homeowners** 

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**Businesses and employers** 

Pedestrian, bicyclists, and equestrians

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**Faith communities** 

**School communities** 

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County advisory boards and commissions

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**Appendices** 

# **Appendices**

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- A. Compilation of Comments
- B. Summary of Breakout Group Participants
- C. Visioning Workshop Evaluation

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